

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9953
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 05281

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UR, US
SUBJECT: SOVIET AMBASSADOR CHERVONENKO'S LUNCHEON FOR
AMBASSADOR RUSH

SUMMARY. AT A FAREWELL LUNCHEON IN MY HONOR AT THE
SOVIET RESIDENCE FEBRUARY 21, AMBASSADOR CHERVONENKO
RAISED PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER TO SAKHAROV MAINLY FOR
THE RECORD. HE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S
WITHDRAWAL OF AMBASSADOR TOON'S NOMINATION TO MOSCOW.
ON CONCORDE, CHERVONENKO HAD DIFFICULTY GRASPING THE
ESSENCE OF THE NEW YORK LANDING RIGHTS PROBLEM. HE
BOASTED OF THE NEW SOVIET EMBASSY COMPLEX IN PARIS
WHICH IS NEARLY COMPLETED. END SUMMARY.

1. HUMAN RIGHTS AND SAKHAROV LETTER. DURING OUR CON-
VERSATION AFTER LUNCHEON AMBASSADOR CHERVONENKO RAISED
THE SUBJECT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER TO SOVIET
DISSIDENT SAKHAROV. HE SAID THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WAS
PUZZLED AS TO WHY PRESIDENT CARTER HAD CHOSEN TO INTER-
FERE SO DIRECTLY IN SOVIET INTERNAL AFFAIRS. ON THE ONE
HAND, CARTER HAS MADE REASONABLE STATEMENTS STRESSING
HIS ADMINISTRATION'S DESIRE TO MOVE AHEAD ON SALT AND ON
THE NEED TO CONTINUE DETENTE. THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WAS
LOOKING FORWARD TO CONSULTING WITH SECRETARY VANCE IN
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MOSCOW IN LATE MARCH. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE LETTER TO
SAKHAROV WAS BOUND TO COMPLICATE OUR RELATIONS.

2. I REPLIED THAT THE SOVIETS MUST UNDERSTAND THAT
RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IS A FUNDAMENTAL AMERICAN
VALUE, WITH ROOTS VERY DEEP IN OUR COUNTRY'S HISTORY.
THE US GOVERNMENT IS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO PROMOTING THIS

CAUSE. OUR COMMITMENT IN THIS AREA, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT JEOPARDIZE DETENTE OR MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS TOWARD A NEW STRATEGIC ARMS AGREEMENT.

3. CHERVONENKO DID NOT DWELL ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTION, AND HE ADOPTED A TONE OF MORE SORROW THAN ANGER. I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT HE FELT HE SHOULD RAISE THE SAKHAROV LETTER FOR THE RECORD BUT WITHOUT MAKING A MAJOR ISSUE OF IT.

4. US-SOVIET RELATIONS. CHERVONENKO ASKED HOW I SAW US-SOVIET RELATIONS DEVELOPING UNDER THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. WOULD THERE BE MOVEMENT, OR WOULD RELATIONS REMAIN QUIESCENT FOR SOME TIME? I REPLIED THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION HAS INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO PURSUE DETENTE ACTIVELY WITH THE SOVIET UNION, ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA OF REDUCING AND CONTROLLING NUCLEAR WEAPONS. IN OTHER AREAS OF OUR RELATIONS WE LOOK FORWARD TO PEACEFUL COMPETITION WITH THE SOVIETS. BOTH CHERVONENKO AND I AGREED THAT OUR RELATIONS MUST BE BASED ON CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE. ONLY IN THAT WAY CAN A FRUITFUL DEVELOPMENT TAKE PLACE WHICH IS IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST.

5. US-FRENCH RELATIONS. CHERVONENKO ALSO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN HAVING MY ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT US-FRENCH RELATIONS. I DESCRIBED THEM, AS I HAVE ON A NUMBER OF RECENT OCCASIONS, AS BASICALLY AS GOOD AND AS PRODUCTIVE AS THEY HAVE EVER BEEN. PRESIDENT GISCARD HAS SAID THAT

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OUR RELATIONS ARE INDEED BETTER THAN EVER. OF COURSE THE FRENCH ARE NEVER EASY TO DEAL WITH, AND WE HAVE AND WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE OUR DIFFERENCES. BUT THE CENTRAL ACHIEVEMENT OF THE LAST FEW YEARS IS THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE AGREED TO DISCUSS THEIR DIFFERENCES IN A CONSTRUCTIVE SPIRIT, AND ARE AVOIDING CONFRONTATION AND PUBLIC POLEMICS. CHERVONENKO OBSERVED THAT THE FRENCH CAN BE VERY DIFFICULT, BUT DID NOT ELABORATE.

6. TOON NOMINATION. CHERVONENKO REFERRED TO PRESS ACCOUNTS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WAS WITHDRAWING A NUMBER OF DIPLOMATIC AND OTHER NOMINATIONS MADE BY FORMER PRESIDENT FORD BUT NOT YET ACTED ON BY THE SENATE, INCLUDING THE NOMINATION OF AMBASSADOR TOON TO MOSCOW. NOTING THAT HE REMEMBERED AMBASSADOR TOON VERY WELL FROM

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HIS TOUR IN PRAGUE, CHERVONENKO ASKED WHAT THE
PRESIDENT'S ACTION MEANT. I SAID THAT THE NEW
PRESIDENT OBVIOUSLY WANTS TO MAKE HIS OWN APPOINTMENTS.
WITHDRAWING THESE NOMINATIONS BEFORE THE SENATE ACTS
WILL GIVE HIM THE OPTION OF REPLACING ANY OR ALL OF
THIS LAST GROUP OF PRESIDENT FORD'S NOMINEES.

7. CONCORDE. DURING LUNCH CHERVONENKO SHOWED PARTI-
CULAR INTEREST IN CONCORDE. DESPITE MY LENGTHY EXPLANA-
TION OF THE HISTORY OF THE LANDING RIGHTS PROBLEM IN
NEW YORK, HE WAS NOT INCLINED TO ACCEPT MY ARGUMENT THAT
OPPOSITION TO CONCORDE IN THE US IS COMING MAINLY FROM
ENVIRONMENTALISTS. HE ALSO SEEMED TO HAVE DIFFICULTY
GRASPING THE CONCEPT OF SEPARATION OF POWERS BETWEEN THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES. CHERVONENKO
DROPPED BROAD HINTS, ONLY HALF-HUMOROUSLY, THAT THE US
MUST BE BLOCKING CONCORDE SERVICE TO NEW YORK AS A
DELIBERATE PRESSURE TACTIC AGAINST THE FRENCH; HE
SUSPECTS THAT THE US IS MERELY BIDDING ITS TIME AND SOME-
DAY WILL SURELY PRODUCE ITS OWN SST. ASKED ABOUT SOVIET
SST DEVELOPMENT, HE SAID THAT CARGO FLIGHTS WERE CON-
TINUING BETWEEN MOSCOW AND ALMA ATA, BUT THAT THE
AUTHORITIES WERE NOT YET READY TO BEGIN PASSENGER
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SERVICE. ONCE INTERNAL PASSENGER FLIGHTS BEGIN, HE

SAID, THERE WILL BE PRESSURES TO EXTEND SOVIET SST SERVICE TO INTERNATIONAL RUNS. HE SEEMED TO IMPLY THAT THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES WILL MOVE SLOWLY IN PUTTING THEIR SST INTO COMMERCIAL SERVICE, WHILE CLOSELY WATCHING THE CONCORDE EXPERIENCE.

8. NEW SOVIET EMBASSY. CHERVONENKO DESCRIBED WITH CONSIDERABLE PRIDE THE NEW SOVIET EMBASSY COMPLEX ON BOULEVARD SUCHET NEAR THE BOIS DE BOULOGNE WHICH HE SAID IS NEARLY FINISHED AND IS ALREADY ABOUT HALF-OCCUPIED. MOST OF THE STAFF HAS MOVED INTO THE APARTMENTS, AND THE CHANCERY OPERATION WILL BE TRANSFERRED BY THIS SUMMER, WHEREUPON THE PRESENT EMBASSY ON RUE DE GRENELLE WHICH DOUBLES AS THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE WILL UNDERGO SOME RENOVATION. HE SAID THE NEW COMPLEX -- WHICH BESIDES THE CHANCERY AND APARTMENTS INCLUDES THEATERS, AUDITORIUMS, A SPORTS CENTER AND A SCHOOL AND COST ABOUT \$20 MILLION -- IS THE LARGEST AND MOST ELABORATE DIPLOMATIC ESTABLISHMENT WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE AT ANY OF THEIR MISSIONS IN THE WEST. CHERVONENKO, WHO HAS OVERSEEN THIS PROJECT DURING HIS TOUR HERE, IS PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT THE CONSTRUCTION HAS PROCEEDED ON SCHEDULE. I ACCEPTED HIS OFFER TO TAKE ME ON A GUIDED TOUR OF THE NEW COMPLEX BEFORE MY DEPARTURE.

9. COMMENT: CHERVONENKO WAS THE PERFECT HOST AT LUNCHEON AND WAS MOST GRACIOUS AND GENEROUS IN HIS REMARKS ON THE SUBJECT OF MY IMMINENT DEPARTURE. HE MADE A POINT OF STRESSING THAT OUR TWO EMBASSIES ENJOY GOOD RELATIONS NOT ONLY AT THE TOP BUT AT THE WORKING LEVELS -- A POSITIVE TREND WHICH HE FELT WAS IMPORTANT TO ENCOURAGE. WHILE WE HAVE NOT HAD BUSINESS TO CONDUCT DIRECTLY WITH EACH OTHER HERE, I FEEL THAT MY PERIODIC EXCHANGES OF VIEWS WITH AMBASSADOR CHERVONENKO HAVE BEEN USEFUL AND HOPEFULLY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO GIVING

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THIS SENIOR SOVIET OFFICIAL A CLEARER PICTURE OF US AIMS AND POLICIES.
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